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SUBJECT: POST RESPONSE TO OIG REPORT NUMBER ISP-I-09-22A, MARCH 2009 (INSPECTION OF EMBASSY NIAMEY)

Ref: McCormick - Amb. Allen e-mail of 03 April 09

11. (U) Embassy Niamey wishes to thank the OIG for a very successful and helpful visit by its inspection team. Post's responses to its "Action" recommendations are provided below:

a. (SBU) Recommendation 1: Embassy Niamey should work with other mission elements to develop and implement a mission-wide communications strategy and public affairs calendar. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Post concurs with the OIG Inspection Team recommendation that Embassy Niamey should develop and implement a mission-wide communications strategy and public affairs calendar. The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) at post will meet with mission agency heads on a regular basis to share and receive information and updates on planned mission-wide events and initiatives, and coordinate a proactive media and public information plan to highlight these activities.

b. (SBU) Recommendation 2: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Niamey, should expand and reconfigure the consular section's workspace. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Post concurs with the OIG Inspection Team that the Consular Section should be redesigned and expanded. Post has begun the initial planning for the Consular Section redesign. The Facilities Manager and Consular Officer have held preliminary discussions on the optimal use of space and a decision has been made to remove non-load bearing walls that will allow additional space from an adjoining conference room to be absorbed by the Consular Section. Post will coordinate with OBO as required to move forward with this renovation as expeditiously as possible.

c. (SBU) Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Niamey, should provide controlled workspace for the collection of consular fees. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Post concurs with the OIG Inspection Team that the consular cashier should have controlled workspace for the collection of consular fees. The Consular Officer and Facilities Manager have taken this into consideration in developing the preliminary plans for the redesign of the Consular Section. An additional window is included in the preliminary design to permit the consular cashier to collect fees from a controlled workspace.

d. (SBU) Recommendation 4: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Resource Management, should devise a mechanism for setting a common exchange rate for consular fees for countries sharing the Communauté Africaine Financière franc and for notifying affected posts. (Action: CA, in coordination with RM)

Management Decision: Post has discontinued adjusting the rate of exchange on a daily basis and has established a system to adjust the rate periodically based on the fluctuation of the euro against the US dollar. The rate is set above the prevailing exchange rate at an

amount that limits the need for coins to provide change and is adjusted to insure that the consular exchange rate is never less than the prevailing exchange rate. On average, the consular rate of exchange has been adjusted once a month since this process was established in January 2009.

e. (SBU) Recommendation 6: Embassy Niamey should implement a residential furniture pool. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Post enthusiastically endorses this OIG Inspection Team recommendation. The Management Officer submitted the proposal to the ICASS Council at a meeting on April 20, 2009. At this point in time the FF&E of all agencies at post is in relatively new, comparable condition. This would facilitate establishment of an ICASS furniture pool without requiring any additional expenditures by an individual agency. The agency representatives have been asked to consider the proposal and the ICASS Council will make a decision on adopting a furniture pool at the May 2009 meeting.

f. (SBU) Recommendation 7: Embassy Niamey should establish a preventive maintenance program and begin scheduling preventive maintenance visits to the residences. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: A preventive maintenance program already exists for monthly preventive maintenance of generators and quarterly preventive maintenance of water distillers. The preventive maintenance program for air conditioners has been limited to annual inspection and servicing due to limited staffing in the Facilities section. Post concurs with the OIG Team recommendation that a more robust preventive maintenance program should be established. Additional staffing is required to implement a quarterly preventive maintenance program for air conditioners and

establish a regular program for other household appliances. A request for two trades helpers, a refrigeration/air conditioning technician, and an electrician were put forward to the ICASS Council for consideration at the April 20, 2009 meeting. The Council Chair asked the Management Officer to prepare a document outlining the impact on ICASS service providers and their ability to meet the Uniform Service Standards under CMI if these positions were not funded. This document will be submitted to the Chair for review and consideration before the May 2009 ICASS Council meeting when a decision will be made on funding the requested ICASS staffing increases.

g. (SBU) Recommendation 8: Embassy Niamey should use the complete WebPASS procurement software application. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: The recommendation to use the complete WebPASS procurement software application was resolved with the introduction of eServices in March 2009. Post began using the fully automated version of WebPass procurement at that time. Requesters now submit procurement requests in eServices, which is directly linked to the WebPass system. Automatic status updates are sent to all customers via the eServices application to keep all parties informed of progress on all procurement requests, including the length of time between initiation of a purchase request and placement of the order with a particular vendor.

h. (SBU) Recommendation 9: Embassy Niamey should add a locally employed staff member to the customs and shipping section. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Post strongly agrees with the OIG Inspection Team recommendation to augment staffing in the GSO customs and shipping section. A request for a Shipping Assistant was put forward to the ICASS Council for consideration at the April 20, 2009 meeting. The Council Chair asked the Management Officer to prepare a document outlining the impact on ICASS service providers and their ability to meet the Uniform Service Standards under CMI if this position (and others) was not funded. This document will be submitted to the Chair for review and consideration before the May 2009 ICASS Council meeting when a decision will be made on funding the requested ICASS staffing increases.

i. (SBU) Recommendation 10: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Niamey, should build a

structure to relocate unclassified telephone equipment. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Post concurs with the OIG Inspection Team that the unclassified telephone equipment should be relocated. Post proposed an immediate temporary solution to relocate the equipment in the server room which unfortunately did not comply with all security requirements. A low-cost temporary structure is currently nearing completion and arrangements are being made for the unclassified equipment to be moved into the post-funded, in-house constructed block building. RIMC assistance will be sought to install the Virtual Private Network device and a visit from a telephone technician will be scheduled to connect the telephone switch to the new telephone demarcation point.

j. (SBU) Recommendation 11: Embassy Niamey should establish recordkeeping procedures that require staff to sign for entry and departure from the frame room. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: The recommendation to establish recordkeeping procedures requiring escorted staff to sign for entry and departure from the frame room was resolved in November 2008 when a log sheet was initiated. All personnel requiring an escort now sign in and out on the log sheet when accessing the frame room, annotating the purpose of the visit, date, and time, as well as the name of the escort in the log.

k. (SBU) Recommendation 12: Embassy Niamey should develop and implement procedures to ensure that cleared American personnel escort any uncleared personnel into the Embassy telephone frame room. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Cleared American escorts are currently required for all uncleared personnel entering the frame room, which is located in CAA space. As indicated in the response to recommendation 11, the name of the escort is annotated in the log sheet to the frame room. Once the unclassified equipment is moved to the newly-constructed building outside the chancery, requisite locks will be installed and uncleared personnel will be escorted at all times when accessing the facility.

l. (SBU) Recommendation 13: Embassy Niamey should develop a contingency plan and system documentation for its classified and unclassified information networks and systems. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Post concurs with the OIG Inspection Team recommendation to develop a contingency plan and system documentation for both the classified and unclassified information networks and systems. A Memorandum of Agreement has been established with Embassy Dakar for off-site storage of back-up tapes and the first shipment is scheduled for May 2009 with the classified diplomatic pouch collection. Armored containers and extra tapes have been purchased to facilitate this procedure. The newly-assigned IMO who arrived at post on April 21 will make systems documentation a priority. A fully staffed IM section (for the first time in six months) will be able to address this recommendation in greater detail by documenting the systems configuration for both the classified and unclassified networks in the coming month.

m. (SBU) Recommendation 14: Embassy Niamey should identify and label wiring and cabling and remove unneeded wiring throughout the compound and the American Cultural Center. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Post concurs with the OIG Inspection Team that wiring and cabling throughout the compound and the ACC require labeling and are in need of attention. An Enterprise & Integrity and Refurbishment (E&IR) Team conducted a survey in July 2004, making a similar recommendation. A report issued in 2005 estimated a total cost of \$171,000 to correct the cabling and wiring issues including a five-week timeframe by tdy personnel to complete the work. Post will coordinate with OBO concerning the Chancery refurbishment project and DS concerning the security upgrade project to minimize repetitive work and streamline the labeling and clean up of cabling throughout the compound as upgrades are installed.

n. (SBU) Recommendation 15: Embassy Ouagadougou should conduct the required weekly high frequency radio checks with designated posts within its contract range, including Embassy Niamey. (Action: Embassy Ouagadougou, in coordination with RIMC Pretoria (Note: It is actually RIMC Frankfurt. End note.) and Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Post concurs with the OIG Inspection Team that weekly high frequency radio checks should be held. Since January 1, 2009, fifteen radio checks have been initiated by Embassy Ouagadougou. The results of the radio check are transmitted to the Department via weekly cable. On occasion, Niamey has not responded due to a failure to establish a link (due to atmospheric conditions) or due to a scheduling conflict which precluded the sole IM staffer at post from being available at the time of the test. When communications have been established, they have ranged from 70-94 percent link quality; with improved quality evident since the installation of a new antenna in late January 2009.

o. (SBU) Recommendation 16: Embassy Niamey should include the information management officer on its core Emergency Action Committee. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: This recommendation was resolved in November 2008 when the IMO became a member of the Emergency Action Committee. The latest Designation of Responsibilities published on April 30, 2009 lists the IMO as a member of the Emergency Action Committee.

p. (SBU) Recommendation 18: Embassy Niamey should establish and implement a standard operating procedure for after-hours collection of consular fees. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: Post concurs with the OIG Inspection Team that an SOP for after-hours collection of consular fees is in order. A standard operating procedure has been established to ensure that any consular fees collected after hours are fully recorded in a receipt book that provides numbered receipts in duplicate, and that the fees are held in a consular safe until they can be recorded in ACRS when the Consular Section opens.

q. (SBU) Recommendation 19: Embassy Niamey should establish a standard operating procedure for the deposit of consular fees with the Class B cashier. (Action: Embassy Niamey)

Management Decision: This recommendation has been resolved with establishment of an SOP that allows the consular sub-cashier to deposit consular collections with the Embassy cashier until 15:00 every day. The consular sub-cashier collects fees between the hours of 9:00 and 13:00 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Since January 2009, daily receipts have been deposited with the Embassy cashier on the day of collection.

12. (SBU) Post considers OIG recommendations 4, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18, and 19 to be resolved, as discussed in the relevant management decisions. Significant progress has been made on recommendations 1 and 10. ICASS Council approval is required before post can close recommendations 6, 7, and 9. Proposals have been put before the ICASS Council and a response is expected in May 2009. Post will continue to work with OBO to take additional measures to close out recommendations 2, 3, and 5. Post will seek the necessary resources to address recommendations 13 and 14.

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